

MR. MOODY ASSAILS THE NUDE IN ART IN NEW YORK.

The Evangelist Writes to the Journal Protesting Against the Sinful Exposure of Paintings and Statuary in the Drawing Rooms of the Rich.

A Nude, by Lefebvre.

The Temptation of St. Anthony.



In the Library of J. J. Astor.

To the New York Journal:

I am glad of an opportunity to say something more through your columns about what I believe to be the reigning evil of these times—licentiousness and lust. If others want to place intemperance at the head of the list I won't quarrel with them; but intemperance is something that can be cured.

Nydia, by Randolph Rogers.



In the Possession of Henry Hilton.

be seen and felt and weighed, but this other is under cover and doing its work when it is not seen. And then, too, intemperance and lust go together nine times out of ten, and the one feeds the other.

I have been speaking lately a good deal about the nude in art, suggested by recent events in high life in New York, and it has

Woman's First Dream of Love, by Thaxter.



Owned by the Astor Family.

MR. MOODY, in the following article, appears as the champion of morality in the home. He thinks the great art works of the masters are indecent, and therefore sinful to look upon. He objects to the classic statuary and to the celebrated paintings of the French school as being an incentive to lewdness, and asserts that they are the creations of a corrupt heathen mythology.

ents are greatly to blame for the impurity of mind and improper courses of their boys and girls. I think the so-called "art" displays in some of our homes are disgraceful and sinful. When our halls and drawing rooms and bedrooms are filled with these images and pictures, and the boys and girls of a certain age are feasting their eyes upon them all the time, it can't be considered strange if impure thoughts are raised in the mind, and if, as the result, they should seek to gratify them, and be led away in that direction by older and wicked companions who are ever on the lookout for such prey.

"Oh," you'll say, "Mr. Moody don't know anything about art; he'd better stick to something he understands." Well, he knows something about sin, and that's what he's talking about in this article. As a good authority says: "Art for art purposes in an art gallery is one thing, like medical works for medical and scientific men, but that does not mean that the nude in art has a right to be placed on exhibition before immature minds so as to endanger their morals." A judge in a decision in one of the English courts asks the question: "What can be more obscene than many pictures publicly exhibited, as the Venus in the Dulwich Gallery?" Now,

In Mrs. Astor's Art Gallery.



"I Think the So-called 'Art' Displays in Some of Our Homes Are Disgraceful."

D 288

ART BRINGS US NEARER TO GOD

There is nothing so bad as bad art, and nothing so influences the good in us as good art. Mr. Moody's attack on art is what might be expected from a man who has been living in the valley all his life. In the valley he sees very little. He is down in a fog, while we admirers of art are climbing to the hilltops where we can survey the surrounding country.

What we want to do in this world is to get rich men and teach them how to buy works of art and preserve them. Teach them how to spend their money in art. The great curse of New York is the fact that the men in it are working like steam engines in business, and don't know how to live and appreciate art. We want to fill New York with works of art instead of destroying them. Art is everything. It is all we have in this world. It brings us nearer to God. Art is making religion. The religion our forefathers knew was the religion of the valleys where Moody is now.

THE NUDE AND THE LEWD.

The wealthy people of this city, who buy pictures, are, as a rule, intelligent, discriminating and cultured, and are not likely to introduce into their own homes any picture which could vitiate the tastes or corrupt the morals of their own families. If there are others, their friends and social acquaintances will not hesitate to discriminate for them. It would truly be a good thing if all the lewd pictures could be brought together and burned. If this were done, I am of the opinion that our museums and picture galleries would not be called upon to furnish fuel for such a fire.

GEORGE H. STORY, Curator of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

I should like to know whether that becomes any the less obscene when it is copied and brought into our private homes? A good many pastors who have opportunities to notice these things, will be ready to endorse the words of Rev. Dr. Parkhurst, of your city, who said some time ago: "There are drawing rooms in this city, drawing rooms of Christians (? whose walls are decorated with representations that it would not be decent for a gentleman and lady to scrutinize together. And I know whereof I affirm. Now, that is what I mean by making a plaything of chastity." * * * I would say that it is quite possible that the sensual appetites of your boys and girls will come into play before they have reached the period of aesthetic appreciation."

Of course, I can't be expected to go into a nice discussion of these different Venuses and the paintings of the modern French artists now before the public. I wouldn't if I could, and I couldn't if I would. There are distinctions among them so far as their lewdness is concerned and their capacity to awaken lewd thoughts everybody admits. But aren't they all of a piece in the sense that they belong to a corrupt heathen mythology, the gods and goddesses of the dark places of the earth?

What was Venus if not the goddess of sensual love? Is not the word itself one that stands for something we do not talk about in general conversation?

Take this figure of the Bacchante proposed to be set up in the court of the beautiful public library of Boston. Don't we read how in old heathen Rome, even before the days of Christ, Bacchante exhibitions were prohibited by law? Do we want to revive the spirit of this thing in our day which was too vile for the heathen? "A naked, tipsy woman dancing in her shame," that is how the Literary World describes it.

Think of it! An intoxicated female, totally unclothed, standing on one foot, her head thrown back, a bunch of grapes in one hand and a new-born infant in the other! Consider the history of this courtesan, consider the character of the living model who posed for the statue; consider its position in a public place where the youth of both sexes are, in a certain sense, obliged to go to obtain books for reading and reference, and what shall we say? Do we parents want to encourage this thing by the examples in our own homes?

"Oh," it will be said, "the refined tastes of the few who are able to appreciate these things as art must not be sacrificed to the vulgar feelings and propensities of the many who know no better than to abuse them in the gratification of their lusts. We

must educate the people up to a higher standard." This is the argument against prohibiting the saloon and similar vices, but it isn't the argument of the true Christian, who says, with Paul, "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no meat while the world standeth. All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient."

But perhaps some of you may give more weight to what a judge may say on such a theme than what Mr. Moody may say, therefore I give you below the exact language of Judge Phillips, in the United States Circuit Court, in a case duly recorded in the Federal reports. He says:

"There is in the popular conception and heart such a thing as modesty. It was born in the Garden of Eden. After Adam and Eve ate of the fruit of the tree of knowledge they passed from that condition of perfectibility which some people nowadays aspire to, and, their eyes being opened, they discerned that there was both good and evil; and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. From that day to this civilized man has carried with him the sense of shame, the feeling that there were some things on which the

In Mrs. Astor's Art Gallery.



"What Was Venus," Says Mr. Moody, "if Not the Goddess of Sensual Love?"

NUDITY IS NOT NECESSARILY IMPURITY.

While I agree with Mr. Moody in much that he says about the corrupting influence of the nude, I should be inclined to make some discrimination in works of art. I do not think that all statues, for example, like Powers' "Greek Slave," are in themselves necessarily suggestive of impurity. I should be inclined, however, to strictly oppose associating even masterpieces of this class in statuary or paintings with surroundings that might make them suggestive of impurity. There is a great deal in how a picture or painting of this class is placed. It may be so associated with certain surroundings that it would suggest impure thoughts.

AARON M. POWELL, President of the American Purity Alliance.

THE HUMAN FIGURE GOD'S GREATEST WORK.

Would it not be outrageous to condemn every country that perpetuated its history by monuments, these monuments representing not only the history, but the human race, both in the spirit and in the body? That is just what Mr. Moody is doing in his condemnation of works of art. The human form in its natural beauty is God's greatest work, and consequently, any one who attempts to preclude with excessive zeal all nude works of art is misled by narrow conceptions of what is noble and good in the universe.

My son, who is now thirteen, is just as familiar with the human form in the nude as I am myself. I do not keep him out of any art. He comes here at all times, and is being educated to see nothing improper in a nude figure of man or woman.

F. M. HANNA, President of the American Sculpture Society.



In the Gallery of J. R. de Lamar.

eye, the mind, should not look; and where men and women become so depraved by the use, or so insensate from perverted education, that they will not veil their eyes, nor hold their tongues, the Government should perform the office for them in protection of the social compact and the body politic."

U. S. vs. Harmon, 45 F. R. 422. Isn't it a shame that the Government is thus obliged to step in and take the place of the parents in the protection of their own children?

And then, there's the amusement we allow our children. "Oh, are you going to thrust over again that old straw about the theatre?" some one says. "Yes, I am, but I'm going to let some one else hold the ball this time. W. B. Howells writes of this in Harper's Weekly. No one can speak of him as puritan or bigoted. And this is what he says of it: "It has been called a school of morals, and the fact is not affected by the other fact that it is far oftener a school of immorality. It is both one and the other; but it is the fault, the shame, the crime of the State that the theatre is ever a school of immorality."

"If in any pulpits were preached by mockeries of purity and appeals to publicity such as we are used to in the theatre; if lying were inculcated, and passion put above duty; if revenge were taught as something noble; if homicide were lightly invoked, and adultery treated as a common affair; somehow the law would reach that point, although the State professes to have no relation with the theatre, in like manner, if in any private school or college the humanities were imparted by a chair devoted to the study of those authors whose work betrays literature the law would somehow intervene to prevent the mischief, although the effect might be logically blamed as a socialistic meddling with private enterprise. The theatre, however, is left unmolested in almost any excess; ideas are enacted if not expressed there which are simply abominable. We all know; we can prove it at any time; it is undeniable."

What have so-called Christian parents got to say to these things? What about taking or sending our boys and girls to such places of amusement? What about setting them the example of going there ourselves?

And then there are other kinds of amusements having the same tendency that I haven't time to dwell upon just now, because I want to close with a word of warning as to the effect of all these things on the future of our country, without saying anything at all about their damping influence upon souls throughout all eternity. But just take the condition of our land to-day. It's not what I say about it, but what others say, who also have opportunities to judge. You have heard what the conservative ministers of your own city have been saying, but hear what smaller testimony is borne from Chicago. There are 7,000 rum shops there to-day, where there were only 3,000 ten years ago, and people are afraid to walk the best lighted boulevards after dusk lest they be sandbagged. The pastor of the most prominent Presbyterian church in that city said last Sunday, after reviewing the state of things, that it seemed as if Chicago were sinking

into the abyss that buried old Rome, with an equally eminent Baptist minister said, one who isn't straining after notoriety, that the city was dominated by the devil. I can quote Boston ministers, careful of their speech, who speak of this old Puritan city, where I now am, in precisely the same way.

Isn't it time to cry a halt? Isn't it time for good men and women

The Magdalen, by Henner.



In the Possession of August Belmont.

to awake and apply the beam of righteous wrath to all this filth and iniquity in our theatres and saloons, in our public prints, in our streets, and even in our homes?

Better and closer yet, shouldn't we look into our very hearts, and cry out to God to purge them of iniquity through the grace which is in the blood of Jesus Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit? "Turn ye at my reproof," saith the Lord, "behold I will pour out my spirit unto you." D. L. MOODY.

Boston, Jan. 30, 1897.

Powers' Greek Slave.



Owned by Judge Horace Russell.